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*BURLINGTON FREE PRESS (VT.)*  
 Date *27 FEB 1990*

# Former director of CIA speaks for defense cuts

By Lori Campbell  
 Free Press Staff Writer

Former CIA director William Colby said Monday that the United States can safely halve its military defense spending by the turn of the century as a new era dawns in the world.

Colby, 70, was in Vermont to persuade Town Meeting Day voters in more than 120 communities to support a non-binding referendum that urges the U.S. government to cut defense spending by at least 5 percent each year.

Changes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union present the same issues that were sorted out after World War II — "how do we create a new world order," said Colby, a 1936 Burlington High School graduate who has a vacation home in Charlotte.

The Berlin Wall's crumbling symbolized the end of an era — a change that has been underscored by demonstration in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union against the economic failure of communist governments, Colby said.

America must reduce its defense spending and funnel those wasted dollars into productive areas — like education, social programs, foreign aid and the national debt — to regain its place as the world leader, Colby said.

"Both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. have 25,000 nuclear weapons each, and (Soviet President Mikhail) Gorbachev has realized that no way on earth we could use even one," Colby said.

"That's a number so absurd it can only be called obscene."

Colby's visit was sponsored by the Vermont Chapter of Sane-Freeze, the Unitarian Universalist Church's Social Responsibility Committee and the Peace and Justice Center.

Vermont is a national leader in addressing the demilitarization issue at the

grass roots, said John Berkowitz, director of the Brattleboro Chapter of Sane-Freeze, a national organization pushing for a weapons freeze.

Colby said he is not a late convert to the arms control doctrine. He said he always favored such a policy, but believes it was impossible to dismantle America's defense apparatus earlier.

Now it is possible, he said.

Americans and Soviets are about to sign the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty that will reduce the 25,000 nuclear weapons each owns to 6,000, he said.

"My point is, we ought to reduce it down to 1,000 each," Colby said. "That's more than enough to deter anyone. But let's get this one (treaty) done first."

Over the past few years, the world has spent more than \$1 trillion annually on defense, Colby said. Americans spent 30 percent of that, the Soviets another 30 percent, and NATO and Warsaw-pact countries spent another 20 percent.

"Like a drunken sailor we've been spending money hand over fist," Colby said. "We have got to improve."

Colby, CIA director from 1973 to 1976, brushed aside criticism from a local human rights activist Ronan Giffin-Murphy, who called Colby a war criminal who murdered 2 million Southeast Asians during the Vietnam War, when he was a career intelligence officer.

Giffin-Murphy handed out fliers in front of the church where Colby spoke which carried statistics of deaths and financial costs of Vietnam.

"These are allegations without substance," Colby said. "I've already testified several times under oath in Congress about this."

Colby travels the globe as a lawyer and an international affairs consultant, lecturing on intelligence issues, the Vietnam War and arms control.